

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 IO-13 AID-05 SP-02
SS-15 NSC-05 PA-01 ICA-11 /108 W
-----095888 151247Z /45-50

R 150725Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7282
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 06616

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, JO, XF
SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER ICATU MEETING

REF: CAITO 16803 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: JORDAN'S FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (JFTU)
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IS BEING COURTED BY VARIOUS FACTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS (ICATU) FOR ITS SUPPORT
IN UPCOMING CONTEST FOR SUPREMACY WITHIN ICATU. SINCE
JORDAN WAS OUSTED FROM ICATU IN 1970, LOCAL UNION LEADER
FINDS SITUATION RATHER AMUSING. EVEN MORE IRONIC IS RUMOR
THAT AMMAN MAY BE CHOSEN AS COMPROMISE SITE FOR SEPTEMBER
ICATU MEETING. JFTU HAS NOT YET AGREED WHICH OF ICATU'S

THREE FACTIONS IT WILL SUPPORT -- IF ANY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF AUGUST 9, JORDANIAN LABOR LEADER ALI BENI-HANI DESCRIBED COMPETITIVE WOOING OF JFTU LEADERSHIP BY ICATU'S THREE FACTIONS. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH JFTU HAS NOT BEEN A MEMBER OF ICATU SINCE 1970, IT APPARENTLY NOW SUITS PURPOSE OF COMPETING ARAB UNIONS TO DRUM UP SUPPORT FROM ANY QUARTER. THEY APPEAR CONVENIENTLY TO REGARD JFTU'S NON-MEMBERSHIP AS MERE TECHNICALITY: JORDAN AFTER ALL, IS STILL AN ICATU MEMBER, BUT REPRESENTED BY RUMP-GROUP BASED IN DAMASCUS. END COMMENT.

3. THREE GROUPS, THE EGYPTIANS, THE IRAQIS AND THE SYRIANS-LIBYANS-ALGERIANS, ARE VYING FOR PREDOMINANCE IN CONFEDERATION, WHICH FELL APART IN WAKE OF SADAT INITIATIVE AT CIRCUS MEETING IN KUWAIT LAST FEBRUARY. BENI-HANI PREDICTED THAT EFFORTS OF THREE FACTIONS TO SECURE JORDANIAN SUPPORT WILL INTENSIFY CONSIDERABLY AS SEPT. 20 ICATU MEETING APPROACHES. BENI-HANI COULD NOT YET SAY WHICH GROUP JFTU WOULD SUPPORT, AS JFTU LEADERSHIP DEEPLY DIVIDED OVER THIS QUESTION.

4. VENUE FOR ICATU MEETING IS STILL UP IN THE AIR. DAMASCUS AND CAIRO APPARENTLY EACH HAVE A SLIGHT EDGE OVER BAGHDAD SO FAR, BUT BENI-HANI CLAIMS THAT AMMAN IS CATCHING THE IMAGINATION OF SOME PARTIES AS COMPROMISE CONFIDENTIAL

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LOCATION FOR BIG MEETING.

5. RE REFTEL ON EGYPTIAN EFFORT TO FORM INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC FEDERATION OF LABOR, JORDANIAN UNION AND LABOR MINISTRY SOURCES CLAIM UNFAMILIARITY WITH EL-BANNA'S APPEAL. IN ANY CASE, WE ARE TOLD THAT ATTEMPTS TO GARNER JFTU SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP IN ICATU COME FROM EGYPTIAN FEDERATION OF LABOR, NOT RPT NOT FROM IIFL.

6. COMMENT: BENI-HANI IS NOT ALONE IN HIS AMUSEMENT THAT JORDAN'S FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS IS BEING COURTED BY ITS BROTHER UNIONS IN ICATU, THE SAME BROTHERS WHO VOTED TO EXPEL JFTU FROM ICATU IN 1970. SUGGESTION THAT AMMAN MAY BE CHOSEN AS COMPROMISE SITE FOR SEPT. MEETING IS SOURCE OF EVEN GREATER AMUSEMENT. (WE ASSUME THAT OTHER ICATU MODERATES ARE ALSO BEING RUSHED BY ICATU FACTIONS AND THAT OTHER COMPROMISE MEETING SITES ARE BEING DISCUSSED.) WHICH OF ICATU'S COMPETING FACTIONS WILL THE JFTU SUPPORT? WE DOUBT THAT JORDANIAN UNION LEADERSHIP WILL COME TO A CONCLUSIVE DECISION ON THE ISSUE BEFORE THE MEETING; THEY WOULD RATHER WAIT TO SEE HOW ALLIANCES AND ENMITIES DEVELOP DURING MEETING. WE BELIEVE CHANCES THAT

ICATU WILL ACTUALLY MEET IN AMMAN ARE SLIM, BUT
JORDANIANS ARE ENJOYING EVEN THE SUGGESTION. THEY WOULD
INDEED LOVE TO HOST THE ICATU MEETING, IF ONLY FOR
OPPORTUNITY TO OSTENTATIOUSLY TURN THE OTHER CHEEK.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978AMMAN06616
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780333-0611
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780861/aaaabytt.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2d05f762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1731763
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEPTEMBER ICATU MEETING
TAGS: ELAB, JO, XF, ICATU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2d05f762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014